The GNWT Response to
"A Vision for the Arts in the NWT"

NWT ARTS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN • JULY 2003

2005-05814

Message from the Ministers

On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, we are pleased to present this Action Plan for the Arts in the Northwest Territories. This Action Plan represents the GNWT Response to recommendations of the NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel.

The Arts Strategy Advisory Panel (ASAP) was made up of representatives from the private and public sectors, as well as non-government organizations from across the NWT. Its mandate was to identify needs, current opportunities and gaps in support to the creative arts and cultural industries. The Panel held public consultation meetings in all regions of the Northwest Territories from June to October 2002, and also polled more widely through a written survey. More than 300 people were consulted during this process.

To each of you who took the time to share your thoughts and vision for the Arts with us, mahsi and quyanainni.

Jake Ootes

Hon. Jake Ootes
Minister
Education, Culture and Employment

Hon. Jim Antoine
Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development

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Introduction

Overview

There is no question that art and artistic expression – in all its many forms – enriches our lives and our communities. It is an important part of life – not only socially and culturally, but also economically.

Expression of the arts – whether visual arts, the written word, music or film – is a vital link to our culture and history. It is an expression of social commentary, a source of entertainment, and for many, a way of life. It promotes personal growth, mental health and general well-being.

Support for the arts can be as diverse as its reach and can take many forms. School arts programs can offer students the opportunity to learn about and appreciate the arts, to develop their interests and discover their talents. Other programs can assist artists to further explore and develop their skills, to support a career. Access to business information and funding can help established artists learn the business side of the arts. And of course, venues to showcase and highlight the many forms of creative talent are also needed.

In the Northwest Territories (NWT), two territorial government departments – Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) and Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) – have shared interests in supporting the arts. Broadly speaking, ECE supports the creative aspects of the arts, while RWED's primary role is supporting the business side of the arts and fine crafts. At times, it is difficult to clearly distinguish these roles.

A recent background study commissioned by ECE indicated there are many supports for the arts already in place in the NWT. In order to examine whether those supports were meeting the needs of the arts community, an NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel was established in 2002 by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), through RWED and ECE.

The Arts Strategy Advisory Panel (ASAP) was made up of representatives from the private and public sectors, as well as non-government organizations from across the NWT. Its mandate was to identify needs, current opportunities and gaps in support to the creative arts and cultural industries. To ensure that the voice of the public was heard, the Panel held public consultation meetings in all regions of the territory from June to October 2002, and also polled more widely through a written survey. The Panel submitted its report to the Ministers of RWED and ECE in January 2003.

The GNWT Response

The GNWT has developed the following Action Plan as a response to the ASAP report. While the report identified 27 recommendations, this plan addresses those with issues that are within the scope of the GNWT.

Overall, the Panel recommendations will be useful in several ways. While aimed at enhancing support for the arts sector, they serve as a needs assessment and can also guide the GNWT in making strategic decisions on how it invests its resources in the arts. Over a longer term, the recommendations will help the GNWT, along with the arts community, to develop a broad vision for the arts and to develop policies that support the government's commitment to that vision. This could include harmonizing GNWT programs with those of other levels of government to ensure efficiency and to ensure that programs are not duplicated.

As developing policies and making program changes takes time, the GNWT reviewed the recommendations in the context of existing parameters and resources. The combined strategies of ECE and RWED – current and proposed – positively address a wide range of issues in the arts sector within the current environment.

On the following pages are the Panel's common themes and associated recommendations, followed by the GNWT response. Current and Immediate Actions are for implementation within the life of the current government (before October 2003). Medium Term Actions are to be implemented in the next fiscal year (before March 31, 2005) and Longer Term Actions will be implemented in subsequent years.

Theme A: Stakeholder Partnerships

NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel

The NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel stated that *"stakeholder partnerships must be strengthened to continue to support, invest in and expand the arts sector. This will be achieved through improved program delivery and expanded roles for stakeholders with clearly defined responsibilities. The arts sector comprises artists, art organizations, various levels of government and the private sector."*

Recommendation A1: Improve intra-governmental delivery of arts and cultural tourism programming.

Recommendation A2: Establish an Arts Advisory Panel with regional representation from the arts sector.

Recommendation A3: Improve support to local artists' guilds and organizations.

Recommendation A4: Enhance the NWT Arts Council funding.

Recommendation A5: Review the NWT Arts Council mandate and structure.

Recommendation A6: Assess the feasibility of an NWT Arts Foundation.

GNWT Response

Current and Immediate Actions

Intra-Governmental Delivery
The GNWT will work on improving the delivery of arts and cultural tourism programming in ECE and RWED by clarifying areas of responsibility and establishing interdepartmental protocols for consistent and effective program delivery.

NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel (ASAP)
The GNWT recognizes that an effective Action Plan will require ongoing input from the arts sector. It will consider options such as the re-establishment of the NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel, an expanded role for the NWT Arts Council, or a combination of these options. The ASAP and the Arts Council will be consulted in the development of the preferred option.

NWT Arts Council
The NWT Arts Council was established in 1985. It was designed to stimulate and promote the creative arts in all disciplines, and to make recommendations on issues and policies associated with the arts and artists in the NWT.

Supported by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the role of the Council is to provide recommendations to the Minister on financial awards for artistic projects in the areas of visual, literary, performing and new media (video, recording). Funding recommendations are also made for arts-based workshops to enable a broad number of artists to have access to resources at one time. A significant increase in funding for workshop applications over the past few years indicates current and ongoing support to local artists' guilds and organizations.

The Council actively promotes its programs throughout the year and ensures information is available through regional offices, local governments and a website. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of individuals and organizations requesting support through the Arts Council program. In response, the amount allocated for awards will be doubled (by restructuring internal funds), starting in fiscal year 2003-04. This amounts to an increase of $140,000.

In order to assist the NWT Arts Council in its review of funding applications, an additional seat on the Council was added in 2002-03, raising the number of members from three to four. ECE will explore the possibility of adding another seat in 2003-04. In consultation with the Council and the arts community, the GNWT will review the Council's mandate and structure to ensure there is maximum effectiveness of the program with the current funding available.

Support to Northern Performers Program
The Support to Northern Performers program provides funding for performing artists in the NWT (individuals or groups). It focuses on support for community based events and activities that showcase performing arts. In response to an increased demand for funding under this program, the GNWT doubled the budget for this program for the fiscal year 2003-04.

Medium Term Actions

Local Artists' Guilds and Organizations
The GNWT will meet with representatives from arts and guilds organizations to determine their specific needs and the most effective ways to provide support. One option may include making better use of current facilities.

NWT Arts Foundation
An NWT Arts Foundation could be an effective vehicle for raising funds for the arts from individuals, organizations and industry. The GNWT will examine the feasibility of establishing such a foundation and how it could work in the NWT. If a foundation were to be established, that activity would fall under longer term actions.

Theme B: Communication and Resources

NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel

The NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel stated that "*there is a lack of information and awareness of programs, services and opportunities available to the arts sector. Enhanced communication and resources will foster identification of opportunities and markets, and facilitate improved production*".

Recommendation B1: Promote arts programming, more widely.

Recommendation B2: Revise the arts funding application process to be more user-friendly.

Recommendation B3: Develop a directory of artists, suppliers, funding agencies and other industry-related material.

Recommendation B4: Publish "How To" guides to instruct artists and would-be artists on methods, tools and arts sector support that is available.

Recommendation B5: Create a multi-media resource centre for the arts sector.

GNWT Response

Current and Immediate Actions

Directory
The GNWT agrees that increased communication between the various components of the arts sector would be beneficial. This includes artists, suppliers, retailers, wholesalers, funding agencies and customers. The GNWT will consult with arts organizations on what would be useful and encourage coordination between components. It will also explore the possibility of a web-based template for e-business information exchange, either within the government or through the private sector.

User-Friendly Funding Applications
The NWT Arts Council annually reviews its application process to identify ways to make it easier and more streamlined for applicants, as well as for the Council. The application was revised last year and is accessible through regional offices in all communities, as well as by mail, fax or on the Council website.

Medium Term Actions

Promote Programs
The GNWT will develop a communications plan focused on more extensive promotion of programs available through ECE and RWED. This includes the NWT Arts Council Program, and the business support programs available through RWED. It also includes Aurora College training programs, which are offered at various times based on student demand and on funding support from third parties.

Longer Term Actions

"How-To" Guides
The GNWT will work to develop guides that provide useful, user-friendly information for current and potential artists. It will consult with the arts community to determine the type of information and format that would be most beneficial. Along with methods, tools and potential funding sources, information may include career training opportunities as well as product standards.

The GNWT is currently developing a career planning booklet entitled "Jobs in Heritage, Culture and the Arts". It will provide labour market information to artists seeking opportunities in the arts. It is critical that all guides are relevant to the intended audience and are not duplicating other publications.

Multi-Media Resource Centre

The GNWT will conduct a needs assessment in partnership with arts representatives to determine if such centres would be useful and/or feasible. Identification of existing resources and equipment should be included, as well as a clear definition of the purpose of such centres. A cost analysis must also be conducted, as there is clear indication that multi-media resource centres would require new or additional resources.

Theme C: Programs and Services

NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel

The NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel stated that *"there is a need to explore and expand government support for the arts through incentives, recognition and strategies that create a more stable foundation for artist creativity and development."*

Recommendation C1: Expand arts sector program funding levels and flexibility and support multi-year and ongoing funding for important regional festivals and other activities.

Recommendation C2: One percent of GNWT building funds to be allocated to the purchase and display of NWT art.

Recommendation C3: Allocate a portion of lottery funds and create a funding distribution mechanism to support the arts sector.

Recommendation C4: Implement an awards and recognition program.

Recommendation C5: Increase arts staffing levels to support program delivery, starting with HQ. (Headquarters/Yellowknife)

Recommendation C6: Eliminate financial disincentives for artists on income assistance or living in public housing.

Recommendation C7: Review and implement tax benefits to artists.

GNWT Response

Current and Immediate Actions

Increase Staff
The GNWT will use resources already designated in ECE and RWED to review current programs and how they can more effectively meet the needs of the arts sector. At Headquarters in Yellowknife, one RWED staff position will have its job description revised to include responsibility for arts and crafts program development and coordination.

RWED currently has a network of regional staff. A position in each region is responsible for tourism, which also includes an arts and crafts component, among other duties. Each region has also had tourism officers in place for many years, supporting the link between tourism, arts and culture.

Expand Arts Funding
The GNWT has doubled the funding available to the NWT Arts Council and the Support to Northern Performers Program in the 2003-04 fiscal year. This action was in response to increased public interest in these programs.

Medium Term Actions

Eliminate Financial Disincentives
The GNWT is presently reviewing the Harmonization Initiative between the NWT Housing Corporation and ECE. This initiative is intended to increase employment incentives available in the Public Housing rent scale so that tenants with lower income, such as artists, may see their rents actually decrease when they earn income.

Longer Term Actions

Expand Arts Funding
The GNWT will review its internal policies for possible options to support important regional festivals and other activities.

One Percent Allocation
The GNWT acknowledges that this approach has been used in other jurisdictions, most notably with the federal government. It will research how these programs are set up, their impacts and their limits. Recognition must be given to the fact that there are limitations to budgets for capital structures, and artistic projects must work within existing budgets.

Presently, architects are encouraged to work with artists to ensure that aspects of buildings reflect the culture of the people. Examples can be seen at the Aurora College Thebacha Campus (Fort Smith), Chief Jimmy Bruneau School (Rae-Edzo) and other buildings in the NWT.

Lottery Funds to Arts Sector
Over the last 5 years, a vast majority of GNWT lottery authority has been delegated to community governments. Last year, the GNWT generated approximately $60,000 in lottery revenues. The GNWT will examine the options and impacts of having a portion of NWT lottery funds allocated to the arts sector. While the GNWT is generally supportive of the approach suggested, Western Canada Lottery (WCL) revenues would not be available for such a program. A broader base of funding for the arts would also be available in the event that an NWT Arts Foundation is established.

Awards and Recognition Program
The GNWT agrees that an awards and recognition program would be a valuable tool to support northern artists and the arts in general. It will discuss the concept and possible options for such a program with the NWT Arts Council.

Tax Benefits to Artists
The current tax system has provisions specifically for artists.

Theme D: Raw Materials and Equipment

NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel

The NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel stated that *"the practice of traditional art forms is dependant on readily available, consistently high quality raw materials that are affordable. The opportunity to experiment with new materials is dependant on the discovery and supply of materials and the necessary tools."*

Recommendation D1: Support the availability of affordable, quality raw materials and equipment.

Recommendation D2: Support the consistent supply of quality traditional raw materials from the NWT.

Recommendation D3: Develop local sources of new and experimental materials, i.e. Sahtu gems, northern gold and diamonds.

Recommendation D4: Existing programs must recognize the distinct nature of the arts sector where materials and equipment are a component of a program.

GNWT Response

Current and Immediate Actions

Raw Materials and Equipment
The GNWT agrees that the practice of traditional art forms is dependant on the availability of affordable, quality raw materials and equipment. Access to these products and the quality of them must also be reliable and consistent. The GNWT will examine this issue with the RWED Wildlife and Fisheries Division and with Arctic Canada Trading, to clearly define the problem and to discuss possible solutions. It will also seek additional input from the arts sector. Potential options could include enhancing programs through RWED. The RWED Grants to Small Business (GSB) Program was designed for these types of needs. The GSB can and has been accessed by artists for raw materials.

New and Experimental Materials
The NWT is fortunate to have a variety of mineral and gem deposits that would serve as new sources of experimental materials for artists (gold, diamonds, gems from the Sahtu region, tourmaline in the Deh Cho, garnets and beryl in the North Slave region). The challenge is in establishing a reliable and consistent supply of raw materials. The GNWT currently offers programs to assist prospectors and the development of business ideas. Information on these programs is available through regional offices, where staff can respond to individual initiatives as appropriate.

Medium Term Actions

Distinct Program Components
The GNWT has proposed the establishment of the Business Development and Investment Corporation (BDIC), which will combine the current NWT Development Corporation and Business Credit Corporation. The new BDIC will be assuming all business grant and contribution programs. At this time, business criteria will remain as currently outlined for those programs but may be examined at a later date, once the Corporation is operational

Theme E: Markets and Marketing

NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel

The NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel stated that *"for the arts sector to realize its full potential, more knowledgeable and expanded markets are necessary to increase income and sales."*

Recommendation E1: Create an NWT arts merchandising system.

Recommendation E2: Increase NWT arts promotion as integral to tourism development by showcasing cultural expression in the NWT, nationally and internationally.

Recommendation E3: Develop a national and international marketing strategy.

Recommendation E4: Support the NWT video, recording and film industries through incentive programs.

Recommendation E5: Establish an NWT Art Bank.

GNWT Response

Current and Immediate Actions

Arts Merchandising System
The GNWT agrees that a universally recognized symbol for quality and authenticity of NWT arts would be a valuable marketing tool. An NWT product logo and tagging of all products would add to the unique value of northern art and would promote awareness.

It is felt that the private sector should retain the lead in the marketing of arts, with assistance from the GNWT to provide an overall image or generic marketing campaign. The GNWT will develop a northern product identification tag, in consultation with the arts sector.

Arts/Tourism Link
The GNWT has always included the promotion of northern art in its tourism promotion. Currently, tourism marketing is carried out by the NWT Arctic Tourism Association (NWTAT). The GNWT will forward the Panel's report to the NWTAT, and will continue to work with that organization in promoting all aspects of the NWT that serve to attract visitors and promote northern arts.

Video, Recording and Film Industries
The GNWT recognizes that there is potential for growth in the video, recording and film industries in the NWT as a source of artistic, as well as economic, development. The NWT Arts Council currently provides funding opportunities for these three disciplines.

On a broader scale, the NWT Film Commission was taken over from the City of Yellowknife by RWED in 1998, to promote this sector. It focuses on promotion of the NWT as a unique filming location, and promotes individual artists and businesses for hire as local resources. Its marketing tools include a website, brochures, a handbook, and trade magazine advertisements or listings. The GNWT will consult with the arts sector to develop a limited incentive program that attracts filmmakers to the north and encourages participation of NWT-based filmmakers and related support. Options that may be considered are labour rebates or transportation assistance for location scouting.

Medium Term Actions

National/International Marketing Strategy
A marketing program must be linked to the volume and type of supply available. The GNWT will work to address supply issues as a priority, and consider further marketing as supply issues are addressed and products requiring further marketing are identified or specific opportunities arise that are likely to enhance sales of NWT arts.

Successful marketing is currently being carried out by the private sector and by Arctic Canada Trading. Enhancing marketing without addressing existing supply issues may not be effective, but marketing efforts must nevertheless continue. Development of a logo will help improve presence in the market, while development of an artist directory and programs to increase raw material supplies will help address supply issues.

The RWED Business Development Fund provides contributions for marketing and other business ventures that include arts and crafts businesses. RWED will also continue to work with the federal Department of Canadian Heritage to facilitate promotion of NWT arts at appropriate international venues, as opportunities arise.

Longer Term Actions

Establish an NWT Art Bank
This recommendation requires further research. Establishing and maintaining an art bank would be an expensive undertaking, which would take resources away from other activities. Although there is potential to raise revenues by renting out art from the art bank, it is uncertain whether those revenues would offset expenses.

Theme F: Education and Training

NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel

The NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel stated that *"arts education and training is necessary for the pursuit of excellence in artistic expression and crucial for the development of the arts sector. These opportunities should be available to both emerging and established artists in pursuit of life long learning."*

Recommendation F1: Arts programming should be a core component of the school curriculum from K-12.

Recommendation F2: Increased traditional and contemporary skill development.

Recommendation F3: Specialized arts teachers staffing.

Recommendation F4: Establish an artist in school program.

Recommendation F5: Link art education with language and cultural programming in all educational initiatives.

Recommendation F6: Develop a youth mentoring program.

Recommendation F7: Increase GNWT staff professional development regarding arts issues and program delivery.

GNWT Response

Current and Immediate Actions

Arts Programming K-12
The GNWT has adopted the Saskatchewan Arts Education Curriculum as an interim program for Grades K-9 until an NWT curriculum is developed. Currently in K-9, 60 hours per year is allocated to arts education.

A collection of visual arts activities entitled "Artists All" was developed by the GNWT Department of Education in 1977, and is still available in most schools. At the secondary level, courses are available in Grades 10, 11 and 12 in art (2 strands), drama, choral music, instrumental music and general music. Dance is a component of the physical education program. Three credits are required in the Fine Arts program (music, art or drama) for high school graduation.

Traditional and Contemporary Skill Development
The GNWT has produced two Aboriginal language and culture curricula – *Dene Kede* (Dene culture) and *Inuuqatigiit* (Inuvialuit culture). These two programs, along with the Northern Studies program, encourage the use of Dene and Inuvialuit artists and artisans in school activities.

Arts Teacher Staffing
Funding for staffing is provided to Divisional Education Councils (DECs) and District Education Authorities (DEAs) by formula, as part of their block funding. Staff is allocated to positions at the discretion of the jurisdiction, based upon its perceived needs.

Larger schools in the NWT may have arts specialists on staff. This is at the discretion of the school boards. Aurora College offers teacher training in the NWT through the Teacher Education Program. A component of this program addresses teaching art in the elementary grades.

Artist In School Program
Three current school programs – Northern Studies, *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* – encourage the use of Dene and Inuvialuit artists and artisans in school activities. Additional funding is available to DECs/DEAs for special cultural projects, which could include bringing artists in to work with students.

Art Education Links to Language and Culture
The GNWT has developed Aboriginal culture-based curricula that have definite links between the arts, language and culture. Specifically, *Dene Kede* centres spirituality outcomes around drumming and musical ceremonies. It also focuses on experiential learning where students learn language through participating in land-based art and craft activities. *Inuuqatigiit* includes the arts in units on chanting and drumming, and traditional responsibilities.

ECE is currently working with its Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) partners to develop a culturally-based arts curriculum for francophone schools in the NWT. The English language arts curriculum for K-12 also includes a "representing" strand. Representing enables students to communicate information and ideas through a variety of media such as video presentations, posters, diagrams, visual art, drama, mime, etc. Creativity is encouraged in all programs.

Youth Mentoring Program
GNWT secondary school programs provide opportunities for work experience. Students interested in the arts can choose to work with artists as a work experience activity.

All senior secondary students are required to have a Career Program Plan in which they map out and update possible pathways to careers of interest. Mentorships are one pathway where students can learn skills required for a career. The opportunity to plan for a mentorship with artists exists within the career program planning process.

Professional Development in Arts
The GNWT currently offers an arts training component for new teachers in the Aurora College Teacher Education Program. Workshops on various aspects of arts education may be provided at regional teachers' conferences.

Medium Term Actions

Arts Programming K-12
Aspects of the *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* curricula include the arts. The GNWT will work on the articulation of specific objectives of the Saskatchewan Arts Education Curriculum with those of these two programs, in preparation for the development of an NWT Arts Curriculum.

Longer Term Actions

Arts Programming K-12
The GNWT will adapt the Saskatchewan Arts Curriculum to meet NWT needs and will include culturally-specific NWT goals. In the curriculum adaptation/development process, a subject advisory committee will be convened to provide input from the various school jurisdictions and from the arts communities.

Youth Mentoring Program
The GNWT recognizes the importance of providing youth with opportunities to work with practicing artists. Current secondary programming provides for such opportunities, but building upon youth mentorship will be taken into further consideration once the new NWT Arts Curriculum is in place.

Professional Development in Arts
Once an NWT Arts Curriculum has been developed, professional development will be provided through the curriculum implementation process.

Theme G: Infrastructure

NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel

The NWT Arts Strategy Advisory Panel stated that *"there is an urgent need for equipment and facilities for the creation and display of art."*

Recommendation G1: Invest in equipment to facilitate arts development.

Recommendation G2: Develop multi-use facilities throughout the north and encourage shared access to existing facilities.

Recommendation G3: Provide adequate support to cultural facilities.

GNWT Response

Current and Immediate Actions

Invest in Equipment
The shared use of equipment in schools and multi-use facilities could allow potential and existing artists to further develop their skills, support economic activity and generally promote arts and cultural industries in the north. The GNWT will consult with school boards and the arts community to determine needs and possible options. Current programs exist through RWED (Grants to Small Business Program) that provide grants for individual artists for tools.

Multi-Use Facilities
The GNWT recognizes the need to support cultural facilities as a means of supporting the arts in the north and currently is involved in several facility-sharing partnerships with various arts organizations. While it encourages the concept of multi-use facilities, it should be noted that the territorial government is not always the primary landlord. In tax based communities, the municipality funds 100% of the capital for new buildings or facilities (except water and sewer projects), so adopting designs for multiple uses becomes a local decision.

Multi-use facilities are a good response to limited capital funding. However, there would need to be functional and design criteria to determine appropriate uses. Without these criteria, issues such as ventilation, insurance, defined space and user safety can become concerns. The GNWT is developing a policy framework to address these issues.

Support to Cultural Facilities
Core funding programs to support cultural facilities have been in force for many years (Northern Arts and Cultural Centre/Yellowknife, Northern Life Museum/Fort Smith, Norman Wells Historical Society). Funding is also provided to Teaching and Learning Centres in most DECs for the development of language and culture materials.

Longer Term Actions

Multi-Use Facilities
The GNWT will consult with the arts sector to determine specific needs for support. It will also research possibilities within various government departments for multiple use of buildings not currently considered.

Support to Cultural Facilities
The GNWT will examine current and potential support mechanisms for operating contributions to arts and cultural organizations.